### University of San Diego

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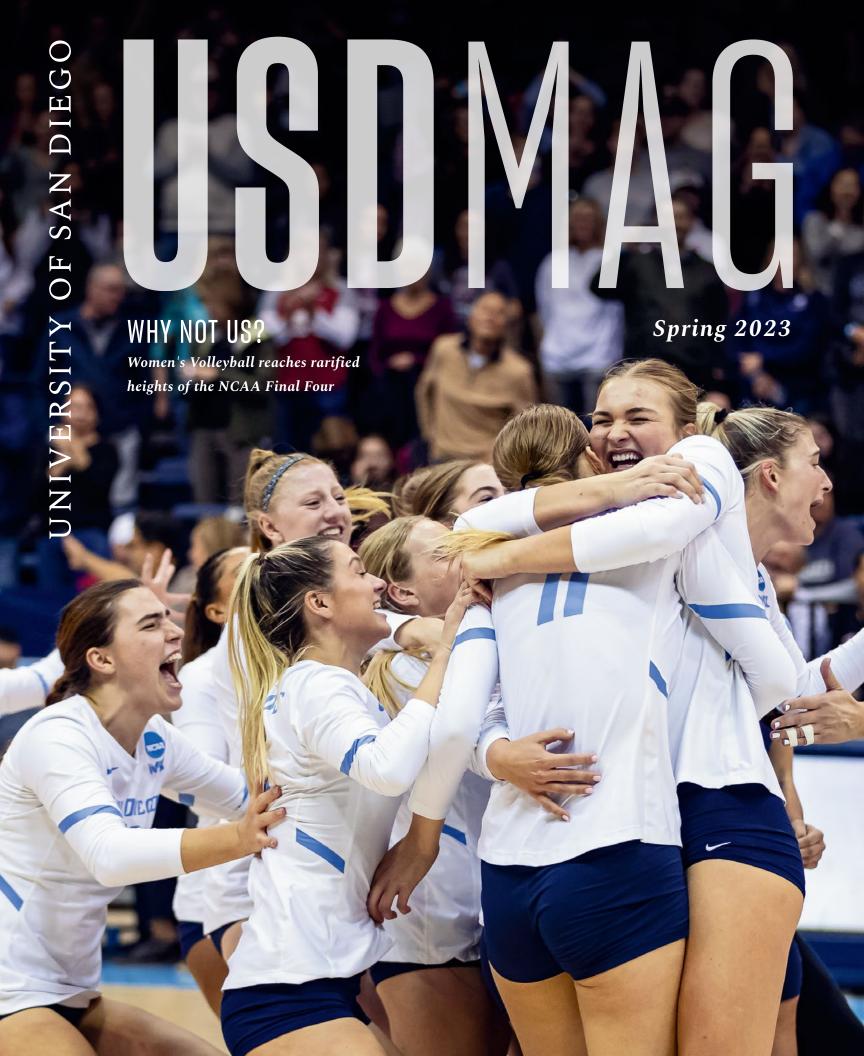
USD Magazine USD News

Spring 2023

# USD Magazine Spring 2023

University of San Diego

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#### [class notes]

Class Notes may be edited for length and clarity.

Photos must be high resolution, so adjust camera settings accordingly. Engagements, pregnancies, personal email addresses and telephone numbers cannot be published.

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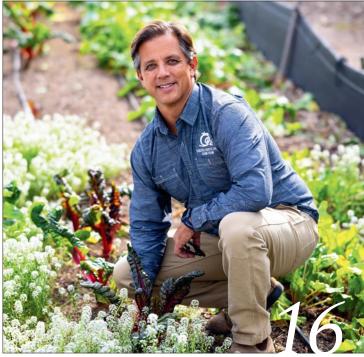
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# CONTENTS



















# USD MAGAZINE

#### **FEATURES**

#### WHY NOT US?

Women's Volleyball has completed a stunning season that produced wild celebrations and tears of joy as the team reached the rarified heights of the NCAA Final Four.

Although they ultimately fell to eventual champion Texas at the semifinals, what the team has achieved is historic, even for the most successful athletic program on campus.

#### TAKING FLIGHT

In his first official visit back to his alma mater during Homecoming and Family Week, NASA astronaut Matthew Dominick '05 (BS/BA) offered some salient advice to current Toreros: dream big and never be afraid of failure. Read an edited version of his live interview with Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering founding dean, Chell Roberts, PhD.

#### WITH HEART AND SOIL

Javier Guerrero '85 (BA) is president and CEO of Coastal Roots Farm, a 17-acre Encinitas operation that practices regenerative farming and is dedicated to the tenets of following practices that are thousands of years old as a living Jewish farm. It's a welcoming place that's dedicated to organic farming and caring for the environment.

#### TORERO NEWS

#### A Prophetic Spirit

A new plaza honors Sister Thea Bowman, who was a prominent Black Catholic teacher, musician, liturgist and scholar.

#### A Common Bond

Vince Moiso '95 (BA) is co-creator of *The CEO Podcast*.

Now three seasons in, the podcast recently featured a conversation with USD President James T. Harris III, DEd.

#### **Stopping Homelessness**

The Housing Rights Project is now the 12th clinic offered by USD's School of Law. Those involved are focused on helping keep people from becoming unhoused.

#### **New Tribal Liaison Welcomed**

A member of the Hopi Tribe from the village of Mishongnovi in Second Mesa, Arizona, Sahmie Wytewa is USD's second tribal liaison.

#### It Starts With a Spark

Spark @ USD launched in the fall of 2022. The institute, housed within the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, is a global accelerator for social innovation.

#### Around the Park

SOLES welcomes Dean Kimberly A. White-Smith, EdD; Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Wałęsa visits campus; \$1.5 million grant to launch the Black InGenius Initiative; Men's Soccer defies the odds to win 2022 WCC title.

#### **CLASS NOTES**

#### **Dreams Do Come True**

Michael Duoto '03 (DEd) has worked nearly his entire professional life in education, a chosen career path that's taken him all over the world. That journey led him and his wife, Jill, to form High Bluff Academy, and now to teach and house a pair of siblings from Afghanistan.

#### **Ready for This Moment**

Paige Hopkins '20 (BA) and Riley Morales '22 (BBA) are among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return overseas since the agency's unprecedented global evacuation in March 2020. They are serving, respectively, in the Dominican Republic and Colombia.

#### ON THE COVER

Cover photograph by Tom Christensen

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# TORERO NEWS



[faith in action]

# A PROPHETIC SPIRIT

### Plaza named after trailblazer Sister Thea Bowman

#### by Matthew Piechalak

he plaza between Copley Library and the Learning Commons will henceforth be known as Sister Thea Bowman Plaza. The plaza was formally named in honor of Bowman during a naming ceremony held in the Learning Commons Town Square in November.

Bowman (pictured), a member of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, was a prominent Black Catholic teacher, musician, liturgist and scholar who made major contributions to the Catholic Church on behalf of African Americans.

During her life, she challenged

the church to accept her as fully Black and fully Catholic.

The naming ceremony featured several speakers and was emceed by Kaia Morrison, a fourth-year computer science major and president of the USD Black Student Union.

"I can't think of any other

word to say about her story than 'amazing," said Morrison. "The work that she did within her own community and the advocacy that she had within the Catholic church throughout her life was absolutely amazing."

Bowman called for reconciliation and full inclusion of African Americans within the Catholic Church, said Rev. Michele Watkins, PhD, assistant professor of Theology and Religious Studies.

"Sister Thea Bowman was a prophetic spirit — she walked as a companion with Christ. She was a freedom fighter," said Watkins.

Sister Bowman was the best kind of teacher — one who teaches out of love for her students, meets them where they're at, and pushes them to grow, said Professor of Theology and Religious Studies Karen Teel, PhD.

"She saw the Church with total clarity, both as it was, and as it should be. She related to everyone she met as though they already were what we should be - even though she was constantly reminding us of how much further we still needed to go," said Teel. "I think that's a really beautiful vision for our community here at USD, to see things as they are, to love the people in front of us right now and to joyfully move forward together building our churches, communities and world as we know they should be — as Sister Thea saw them."

Bowman is one of six Black saints-in-waiting in the United States.

"Having her name on this plaza, a place where students and faculty will know that they are gathering in her name, will keep her life, her legacy, her inspiration alive for generations to come," said Vice President of Mission Integration Michael Lovette-Colyer.

The naming of the plaza was first announced by USD President James T. Harris III, DEd, during the 2022 Black Catholic Theological Symposium held on campus in October. Bowman was a member of the organization and was present at the first symposium in Baltimore in 1978.

"When I made the announcement, I don't think I've heard such a joyful response in my career — there were tears of joy that we were going to make this step as a university," recalled Harris, while speaking at the naming ceremony. "It's such a beautiful and peaceful gathering place. This is a day we will all remember."

[familial]

# A COMMON BOND

## Alumni president launches new podcast

by Elena Gomez

ometimes big ideas can come from simple, everyday moments — at least that's how USD alumnus Vince Moiso '95 (BA) came to create *The CEO Podcast* with fellow entrepreneur Scott De Long. The two were having a beer in Moiso's backyard when a conversation about their families segued to business.

"We jumped into a bunch of different topics, and he stopped me at one point and said, 'This should be a podcast. Do you want to do a podcast?' I said, 'I would love to do a podcast.' That was June of 2021. By July we launched our podcast," says Moiso.

More than a year later and three seasons in, the hosts focus each weekly episode on a variety of topics that range from overcoming adversity to leading with purpose in business. USD President James T. Harris III, DEd, was a guest during the current season; he talked about his leadership journey and discussed the importance of embodying the mission of your workplace.

SOLES alumna Khea Pollard '15 (BA), '18 (MA), who runs Cafe X: By Any Beans Necessary in Sherman Heights, was also a recent guest on the podcast.

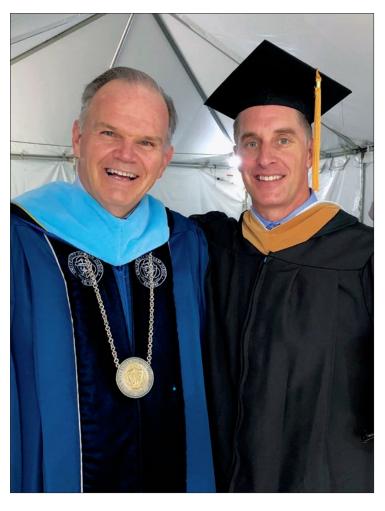
Moiso (shown alongside President Harris) is the president of Oceanside Glass and Tile and founder and president of VIS Aspire Inc., a small business coaching company.

He's also in his second year as the president of USD's alumni association. "It's all about connection. If we can get more and more alumni to reconnect and revisit the feeling they had when they were on campus, everything else comes together," he says.

Moiso's daughter, Viviana '24 (BA) is currently studying English, theatre and music. "I was so excited when she chose USD," he says. "I couldn't be prouder of what she's doing and what she's accomplishing. Sharing that bond — that both of us went to USD and we have that connection together — is huge."

Connection is something Moiso clearly values in his role as a father, alumni association president and with his podcast adventure. He hopes others can become inspired by his podcast by taking nuggets of wisdom from each episode.

"My hope, always, is that somebody listens to an episode, and it really resonates with them," he says. "For my whole life, once I've seen someone else do something, then I know I can do it too. Once I know they've been successful, I know I can do that as well."





[stability]

# STOPPING HOMELESSNESS

## Newest legal clinic aims to help the unhoused

by Matthew Piechalak

he Housing Rights Project at USD was founded in December 2021 to provide pro bono legal services to underserved populations facing homelessness in San Diego County. In January 2023, the project became the 12th clinic of the School of Law.

"We are very excited to hold our first classes this spring," says Alysson Snow, professor of practice for the Housing Rights Project. "We are really focused on stopping homelessness before it starts." And doing that begins with fighting evictions before they happen. "It often starts at the courthouse steps," she adds.

The project began when the School of Law Legal Clinics received a \$230,000 grant award from Price Philanthropies, a private family foundation dedicated to improving life opportunities for youth and families.

The aim of the effort is to provide education, outreach and direct client representation to serve the legal needs of low-income and undocumented tenants facing housing instability and homelessness.

"The first part was just establishing our place in the community and figuring out where the biggest need was," explains Snow. "There were people falling through the cracks who

didn't qualify for legal aid services. We're designed to help the people who are most in need and really don't have access to any other legal services assistance."

"A main focus is to represent those who are undocumented," explains Robert Muth, faculty director of the law school's legal clinics. "This is a population that has a very difficult time finding pro bono legal services and a population that often gets targeted because most of the time, unscrupulous landlords feel that they won't vindicate their rights because they are concerned about their legal status."

Previously, the program had been using Civil Clinic resources.

Now that the school has secured additional funding, the new clinic's status will be ensured for the next few years. "This move demonstrates that we're committed to the project. This will be an integral part of our clinical program for the foreseeable future," adds Muth.

The School of Law Legal Clinics are a part of the experiential learning curriculum in which enrolled students receive academic credit and vital real-world experience. Students — who become certified — act as attornevs on cases and can conduct client interviews, make arguments and cross examine witnesses. Professors supervise their work, a similar dynamic to a professional law firm, where associates are under the guidance of partners.

"It's designed to help law students learn the law by actually practicing with real clients in real situations," Snow says. "The beautiful part is we are attacking housing instability."

"The idea is that it's a bridge," Muth adds. "When students leave law school, they'll be practice ready and able to go to a firm and have an idea of how to run a case."

The Housing Rights Project was previously only able to take on one or two housing projects at a time. Establishing the new clinic will mean that a larger number of clients who have tremendous need can be served, he says.

"We saw people coming out of the pandemic who were struggling and who were going to be on the street," Muth says. "It's a really important resource for us to be able to provide to the community. These are usually people who are working and who have children in schools. Keeping them in a stable environment is really important, in San Diego County and more broadly, in California."

[insightful]

# NEW TRIBAL LIAISON

## Sahmie Wytewa joins Center for Inclusion and Diversity

by Matthew Piechalak

ahmie S. Wytewa strongly believes in advocacy, and that the first step to offering support — whether it be for a cause, a belief or a marginalized community — is to pay attention.

"It's important to be able to listen, learn and offer insight," says Wytewa, USD's new tribal liaison. "One of my goals is to make sure I authentically show up for the students and faculty members."

Wytewa is a member of the Hopi Tribe from the village of Mishongnovi in Second Mesa, Arizona. She is the second tribal liaison at USD, which piloted the position in 2012 and institutionalized the role in 2014.

Among the many roles and responsibilities of the tribal liaison is the recruitment, retention and graduation of Native and Indigenous students; development of curricular and extracurricular programming; enhancing cultural empowerment and advocacy; deepening cross-university partnerships; garnering tribal community support, building, engagement and healing; and honing community outreach and organizing.

Wytewa was hired earlier this year following a nationwide search.

"I am delighted to welcome Sahmie to our USD community," says USD Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Center for Inclusion and Diversity Director Regina Dixon-Reeves, PhD. "She is an accomplished educator, administrator, tribal leader and liaison. Her work within the Office of the Tribal Liaison will be a great complement to the work being done within the Center for Inclusion and Diversity."

The tribal liaison role has become common in government sectors but is still relatively new in higher education. Wytewa says the position creates a unique opportunity to connect to both Native and Indigenous populations and discover the values that will assure student success.

"From the perspective of a tribal liaison, one of the biggest components of your work is to prepare to listen and fully contextualize where people are coming from, not only in a professional sector or from the organizational capacity, but spiritually."

Prior to USD, Wytewa served as tribal liaison and policy coordinator for the Arizona Department of Education. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Arizona State University and a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University.

The traditional values of the Hopi Tribe center on caretaking, explains Wytewa. "Reciprocity is a very big value of the Hopi people — we are constantly giving and receiving all year," she says. "Caretaking and stewardship carry over into my work. It's important that this role is flexible to make it what we need in this time, and that capabilities, skills and talents align the position to the values and mission of the university."

Wytewa, who considers herself a lifetime learner and educator, savs the decision to leave her home in Arizona and come to USD was faith-based.

"Most of my friends and family will tell you that I'm a pretty big believer in the universe," she says. "We are ultimately the prayers of our ancestors hundreds of years ago. Being able to connect with so many stakeholders just felt right. I'm supposed to be here."

sandiego.edu/tribal-2022





[action]

# IT STARTS WITH A SPARK

### Lasting social change focus of new Kroc School institute

by Kelsey Grey '15 (BA)

or years, USD has stood as a global leader as a Changemaker campus, helping students discover the solutions our world needs to address pressing social issues. Still, a central space where people could come together to share ideas around social innovation was missing.

Until now.

Spark @ USD launched in the fall of 2022. It's an institute that's housed within the Joan B. Kroc

School of Peace Studies and is a global accelerator for social innovation.

"Our vision for Spark @ USD is to create a place where students, faculty members and community stakeholders can bring a kernel of an idea and connect with others to get that spark to tackle the world's biggest challenges," explains Associate Director of Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Andrew Biros.

Spark @ USD is founded on

three pillars: cultivate social entrepreneurs, produce knowledge for changemakers and connect students to action.

The key way that Spark @ USD cultivates social entrepreneurs is through the Fowler Global Social Innovation Challenge (FGSIC), a global pitch competition in which students come up with ideas grounded in the United Nations sustainable development goals and create ventures — for profit and nonprofit — that seek to

address those goals at a local level.

This past year at the FGSIC finals, 26 global universities participated, with 41 student venture teams pitching their ideas. In total, \$75,000 was invested in 18 promising global social ventures. These students can continue to work on their social ventures and drive positive change thanks to Ron and Alexis Fowler, who created a \$5 million endowment for the FGSIC.

"Ron and Alexis' generosity will afford us to grow the FGSIC so that we are able to bring more global social entrepreneurs together and to invest in and support high-quality, social ventures that otherwise might not have made the

impact we're confident they can have," says Biros.

Toward that end, Spark @ USD has launched a series of teaching cases on social impact. These cases provide students with a front-row seat to the work being done by global social innovators and leaders, while encouraging students to bring new ways of thinking and problem-solving to the table.

Currently, there are three teaching cases written by Kroc School of Peace Studies faculty that share specific dilemmas that invite students to answer the question, "What would you do if you were a company or organization in this circumstance?"

"When it comes to social impact, we need teaching tools for students that prepare them to drive positive social change," says Biros. "Relying on the experiences of those who are doing that now and affording students [the opportunity] to grapple with the challenges that those people face is crucial."

Spark @ USD works to connect students to action by bringing in leading experts of innovation to engage with students and faculty members. The Kroc School welcomed its first-ever social innovator in residence, Roshan Paul, this fall. Paul launched the Amani Institute in Nairobi, Kenya more than a decade ago for individuals and organizations seeking to lead social change.

During his time at USD, Paul connected with students to share ideas and even helped a group of graduate students launch a new podcast called *Is the World on Fire?* 

"We're very grateful to have Roshan Paul as our first social innovator in residence," says Biros.

Board Chair Emeritus Ron Fowler congratulates the grand-prizewinning team at the Global Finals of the 2022 Fowler Global Social Innovation Challenge.

# [AROUND THE PARK]

#### **SOLES Welcomes New Dean**

USD's School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) welcomed its new dean in Fall 2022. Kimberly A. White-Smith, EdD, comes to USD from the University of La Verne. "I embrace the vision of supporting students to engage in their research and academics to make informed choices and leverage global perspectives that lead to constructive action in their work, personal lives, and communities," she says. "I believe this to be synergistic with my goals as a leader: to recognize the unique gifts and genius of every learner and honor the different ways those gifts manifest. I know our work together will be transformational." SOLES' nationally accredited programs span the realms of leadership, teaching and counseling, both at graduate and undergraduate levels.



#### **Nobel Peace Prize Winner Visits USD**

Former president of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize winner Lech Wałęsa visited USD's campus in mid-November. He discussed current world events, his view of the United States' role on the global stage, the history of the Solidarity Movement and his vision for a prosperous future. His address, "The Fall of Communism, Russia, and the War in Ukraine," was part of the Distinguished Lecture Series at the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice. Wałęsa — the first-ever Polish leader elected by popular vote — co-founded the Solidarity Movement, which led to the first democratic elections in the country, the fall of communism in Poland and ultimately helped lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.



#### **College Access Initiative for Black Students**

The School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) has received \$1.5 million from the San Diego Foundation to develop and launch the Black InGenius Initiative (BiGI) — a college access and early literacy program for Black students within the San Diego region. Sixty rising sixth graders and their families will be selected for BiGI every year starting in Fall 2023. SOLES faculty and students will supplement students' academics to assist underrepresented communities with consistent academic support to ensure college access. For students who have completed seven years of participation in BiGI and are accepted to USD, the university will meet 100% of the student's federally demonstrated financial need with a personalized financial assistance package.



#### Men's Soccer Defies the Odds To Win 2022 WCC Title

USD's Men's Soccer team can look at the totality of their 2022 season as a smashing success. They won the WCC championship by going undefeated in league play for the first time in more than two decades; an impressive feat from a squad that was picked by many to finish near the bottom of the WCC standings prior to the start of the season. "We're in the history books. We've surpassed a lot of people's expectations," said junior midfielder and team captain Ross Johnstone. Head Coach Brian Quinn echoed that sentiment. "This group never lost faith in each other and came together as a unit in the way a coach loves to see. They well and truly deserve the WCC title."





# WHY NOT US?

# Women's Volleyball reaches rarified heights of the NCAA Final Four

by Don Norcross

n an evening in late August, more than 400 USD scholar-athletes gathered in Founders Chapel to celebrate The Blessing of the Toreros. The annual event is held on the night before the first day of school to commemorate a new year for USD athletics.

Sitting in the front three rows on the left side of the chapel was USD's women's volleyball team, which that weekend had traveled to College Station, Texas, and returned home with a 3-0 record, including an upset of sixthranked Pitt.

"I told the scholar-athletes they had sitting with them — in front, in those first three rows — a role model of what every team should aspire to be," recalls Executive Director of Athletics Bill McGillis.

The 18 players on that team, head coach Jennifer Petrie and the Founders Chapel audience could not have known it at the time, but Women's Volleyball had taken the initial steps of what would be a stunning season.

Some 344 Division I universities compete in women's volleyball. Three and half months after The Blessing of the Toreros, USD was one of only four teams remaining in the NCAA Tournament.

Although USD would fall to eventual champion Texas at the Final Four semifinals in Omaha, Nebraska, what the Toreros achieved along that

Outside hitter Breana Edwards goes in for the kill.

path was historic.

On the podium after the loss to Texas, Petrie said, "I could not be more proud of these girls and what they have done for our program and the university, for the city of San Diego, for each other and for the staff."

Moments later, fifth-year senior and outside hitter Katie Lukes added, "It's definitely been a dream."

To understand why what Petrie and her band of 18 players accomplished was incredible, one needs some perspective. The USD volleyball team is the most successful athletic program on campus, and Petrie is the most successful coach of any college team in San Diego.

The Toreros have been ranked in the American Volleyball Coaches Association top 25 at some point in each of the past 25 seasons. Petrie just completed her 24th season as USD's head coach. The Toreros have advanced to the NCAA Tournament in 22 of those seasons.

But for all the program's success, it seemingly had a ceiling, never advancing past the Sweet 16.

Then along came the 2022 team, which shattered that ceiling.

The Toreros advanced to the Final Four for the first time. USD finished 31-2, the only losses coming to Texas and Louisville, the NCAA championship finalists. The Toreros ran off 28 straight wins before falling to the Longhorns.

Three players — setter Gabby

Blossom (first team), opposite Grace Frohling (second team) and Lukes (third team) — earned All-American honors, the first time USD had three players earn that status in the same year.

Petrie was named the national coach of the year, another USD first

In a moving acceptance speech, Petrie thanked her parents and let the audience know that her father had passed away in September.

"It's been a very hard season in that regard," she said. "But they pushed me to be the very best that I would be, with support, love and grace."

The team adopted two mantras. One was "18 strong," meaning every player was equally responsible for the team's success. And the one that became a rallying cry: "Why not us?"

At the Final Four, nearly 250 fans showed up to cheer on the Toreros, almost all of them decked out in Torero Blue T-shirts and sweatshirts with "Why not us?" emblazoned across the front.

Part of what made the 2022 season so special is that it required a melding of talent. Six starters returned from the 2021 team that finished 20-8, losing to Rice in the first round of the NCAA tournament.

Petrie brought in two key graduate transfers, Blossom and outside hitter Breana Edwards. Blossom, who played four years at Penn State, was what Petrie called "the X factor," a talented athlete who could deliver accurate sets from anywhere on the court.

Blossom became a leader and there was no jealousy among the players who had been on the roster for years.

"I think the transition went well because we knew that we needed her," said Frohling.

From the University of Indiana, the 6'3" Edwards brought a thunderous kill shot so powerful it made a distinct sound.

"Like a sonic boom," said

"I'm surprised our gym doesn't have dents in the floor," joked middle blocker Leyla Blackwell.

And it was a team that played with unabashed joy. In the regional final match against Stanford, on the Cardinal's home floor, USD rallied from down two sets to one, trailing 23-22 in the fourth set to eventually win in five sets.

When a Stanford block fell out of bounds, clinching the USD win that catapulted the Toreros to the Final Four, players on the bench mobbed those on the floor. The last to emerge from the dogpile was Lukes, tears streaming down her face.

"The grit our team showed that was surreal," said Lukes.

Five days later, the Toreros lost to Texas and the dream season was over. But not the memories.

"I'm just really, really proud," Lukes said, minutes after the season ended. "It's something I'll never forget."



# Taking Flight

# NASA Astronaut Matthew Dominick returns to campus

edited by Julene Snyder

In his first official visit back to his alma mater, NASA astronaut Matthew Dominick '05 (BS/BA) offered some salient advice to current Toreros: dream big and never be afraid of failure.

Along with meeting with various student groups around campus, Dominick was the special guest of Toreros in Space, a homecoming event hosted by the Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering that featured a meet-and-greet brunch with the USD community and a live interview with the founding dean of the Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering, Chell Roberts, PhD.

Following is an edited version of that conversation.

**ROBERTS:** Matt, how did you become an astronaut?

**DOMINICK:** I mean, you just go to USD. Next question?

I'm joking, of course. But that is a part of how you become an astronaut. It's not just one thing: It starts with having a family that nurtures exploration and creativity. Being an astronaut was a cool thing I wanted to do as a kid. Of course, I also wanted to be an architect or a veterinarian. I did know when I got to the University of San Diego that you can do anything you want after you become an engineer.

There's a skill component to becoming an astronaut, but there's also luck and there's timing, and I control one of those three things. I wanted to do things I was passionate about, and to keep doing things that I was interested in. I knew that if I did that, I would never feel I was at work.

**ROBERTS:** Did they call you or did you call them?

**DOMINICK:** I applied in 2013. They send you a really nice rejection letter in the mail.

**ROBERTS:** You got a rejection letter?

**DOMINICK:** I got a nice letter many, many months after they announced the new class. This is the government. Things take a while.

ROBERTS: You applied again?

**DOMINICK:** Yes. There's a process where they call references and

then there are multiple interviews. The first for me was four days long; they fly you out to Houston for that. The final round is a whole week, seven days straight. Actually, I just realized it was my first-ever job interview. I went to USD and then I was in the Navy, which wasn't really a job interview. They said, 'Hey, join us.' And I said, 'OK.' So, my first job interview was with NASA. I'm batting a thousand.

**ROBERTS:** How do you train to be an astronaut?

**DOMINICK:** Well, you train to do everything. When you're in space, there's no plumber. You are the plumber. I can fix a space toilet. I've taken it apart and put it back together many times in training. You train to do electri-

cal work. You're trained to fly the space station. If somebody gets sick, you've got to help them.

**ROBERTS:** Don't you have to do the weightless thing? Do they take you up and drop you from an airplane or put you underwater?

**DOMINICK:** Can you imagine, on the space station being that person hanging on with one arm going 17,500 miles an hour, going around the Earth every 90 minutes? You train to do this. It's super dangerous. At that point in time, the person's spacecraft is their spacesuit. And most of the boxes that you need to repair are outside the space station.

The orange rails are there to walk around with your hands, going hand over hand. The gloves are important. While most

glove sizes come in small, medium, large and extra-large, since we're the government, we have 42 sizes of space gloves. There's a laser scan of your hands to figure out what might work.

**ROBERTS:** You'll do this sort of thing hours at a time?

**DOMINICK:** We start briefing at about 6:30 a.m. I'll get in the suit at 8:30 in the morning, and I'll be out by 3 or 4 in the afternoon.

has a very specific turn rate and torque for every bolt on the Space Station. This is what we use underwater because it's neutrally buoyant.

**ROBERTS:** Have you spent weeks underwater?

**DOMINICK:** We're always training to do everything and so that we don't forget it, we keep doing it. I think our minimums are that about four times a year I need to

**DOMINICK:** It's absolutely an option, yeah. The systems today for space are a little bit different than classic flying. Flying in an atmosphere is much harder than flying in space. Space is pretty much frictionless. The mechanics are pretty simple. When you're flying an airplane, it's much harder to test. If you change your angle of attack, you have all these nonlinear effects with the atmosphere. It's a total disaster mathwise, and you've

all humans and the laws of physics apply equally to all of us. Mars is in the future, but it's really hard to get there and we need to go test out the engineering stuff on the moon to figure it out.

**ROBERTS:** It used to be that NASA was the only U.S.-based organization going into space, but now we've got a whole bunch. How does that change the role of NASA?

**DOMINICK:** A rising tide raises all boats. In 2011, there was one ride to space. Then SpaceX started launching cargo vehicles to the International Space Station. They used that technology and leveraged it so that, in May 2020, they launched their first set of humans, two people.

Just yesterday, we brought home four people from the Space Station and it's just background noise. How many people knew that we landed four people yesterday? A few, right? And this is a nerd-heavy room. I feel the energy. I want to get to the point that it's just like commercial air travel. In May 2020, we launched two people on a test flight. Now, if my numbers are right, 30 people have launched and landed.

**ROBERTS:** What's a day or a month like on the Space Station?

DOMINICK: I work in Mission Control a lot and I haven't been to space yet, but [in space] everybody plans your day. You have an iPad and a laptop with a moving red line that kind of looks like a Gantt chart. On the left on the vertical axis is every crew member's name. And the horizontal part is time. Each block is what you're supposed to be doing in that time block, like an Outlook calendar.

It's very specific, like 'You need to go swap the seals on this thing. It's going to take you an hour and a half.' If you have trouble, you



Also, I'm wearing a diaper. This is a long day. My kids love the fact that I wear a diaper. They love to remind the general public that I wear a diaper, but they don't realize that I'm comfortable saying it. I am wearing a diaper. Well, not right now.

**ROBERTS:** I imagine you spend a lot of time learning the name of the tools, right?

**DOMINICK:** Yes, just learning the names of the 1,500-plus tools we use, so that we can communicate clearly with the ground. We are their eyes. For example, one of the big tools that we use is very expensive and made of metal. It

go underwater. Sometimes we go underwater to test something and sometimes something breaks on the Space Station, which actually happens quite a bit. It's giant, it's massive, it's 20 years old. They'll say, 'We've got to fix this thing.' We'll take two people on Earth with the whole engineering team and we'll practice the repair that we're going to do on Space Station 10 times to make sure it's just right. And then we'll email the procedures to the Space Station and talk it through with them.

**ROBERTS:** As a pilot, would you ever see yourself as the lead pilot flying to the moon?

got to go to computational fluid dynamics and it's just a mess. But in space, you just bump it and it just keeps going forever. It's easy.

**ROBERTS:** How about Mars? Is Mars in the future?

DOMINICK: Mars is in the future. I hope so. We need to be a multiplanetary species. There's a really cool international component: Six months or a year ago, three countries launched space probes to go to Mars, and they all had to launch within a 20-day window from Earth to meet the timing to go to Mars. It doesn't matter what country you're from; we're

call the ground and talk to me at Mission Control or another person like me, and I'll say, 'Hey, you skipped Step 12, get back on it.'

You do the timeline, and it shows you the red line is progressing. Here's your scheduled wakeup time at 7 a.m. There's a morning meeting at 8:30 after you take a sponge bath. There's a designated work out time because if you don't work out, bad things happen because your bone density goes away. They upload your workout program to the machine and you do the workout program scheduled for you by the staff that tells you what you're supposed to be doing, based upon your mission performance. You're a lab rat.

You do the timeline, and then maybe you have an experiment to do. We have universities and researchers from around the world that want to see what happens to certain things in space.

**ROBERTS:** Don't astronauts take an artifact [to space] with them? Like a secret thing in their pocket when they go?

**DOMINICK:** We smuggle absolutely nothing.

**ROBERTS:** If you could take an artifact, which you wouldn't, what artifact would you take?

amount of personal stuff to take with you. My father was in the Air Force. In 1971, he bought an original moon watch that's analog; there are no batteries. I have very vivid memories as a kid when every Thanksgiving we would drive from Denver to Phoenix to see family. There were no iPhones back then; there was no digital stuff, there was no data. You had to live with your brain.

I remember having the Rand McNally Atlas out and noting the distance between cities, and I would line my head up with the vertical column of the window in the car and at the exact second we hit the mile marker, I'd start the stopwatch on this 1971 chronograph and I'd stop it and calculate our velocity every mile and then recalculate our arrival time, and I'd get it down to within a couple of minutes, I could probably beat a modern GPS doing that.

That watch of my father's is important to me. He gave it to me a couple years ago and I've taken it flying around places. I plan to take it with me.

# The following questions were asked by audience members.

**AUDIENCE:** What was the hardest part of your training? Was there something that made you question if you really wanted to do this?

**DOMINICK:** That has never been a question for me, but from the technical side, the hardest thing, for me, is foreign language. Part of the international agreement for the International Space Station is that everybody who goes shall speak English and Russian, regardless of where you come from. A Japanese astronaut has to speak English and Russian in addition to Japanese. That's part of the agreement; the Space Station is done in partnership.

It's hard for me to learn Russian; I'm an engineer at heart. The truth is, it's very difficult. But I want to learn to speak Russian out of respect. They're incredibly intelligent human beings. I love working with them. Their engineers are incredible. The stuff they build is incredible. So, I learned Russian out of respect for them.

**AUDIENCE:** Can you talk about your time at USD?

**DOMINICK:** I learned a lot of good lessons at USD and the first one I learned is that I was a hot mess because I wanted to do every-

thing. I didn't say no to anything. I was involved in way too many campus organizations my first couple of years. My grades were less than stellar. I didn't really narrow my focus until my junior or senior year, so I really recommend the victory lap, also known as the fifth year.

USD was great because of the liberal arts. It's worth the extra time to be an engineer and do liberal arts. When I meet USD engineers out in the field, they're able to communicate what they're doing in a more well-rounded way. Every job I've been in is about finding a way to meet somebody where they're at. Having an exposure to a broad diversity of cultures and ideas and languages and thoughts gives you a huge advantage.

**AUDIENCE:** If you were to go back to when you were a freshman and give yourself some words of wisdom, what would you say?

**DOMINICK:** I'd tell them, 'Narrow your focus. Be good at a few things.' But the other side of that is that you can afford to make a bunch of mistakes. 'Go hard. Push yourself. Make mistakes.' This is the time to make them so

that you can learn from them. And go hard the first couple of years to set a strong foundation, because you'll use that. Those are the building blocks from which you'll do everything else.

**AUDIENCE:** What advice can you give for those who want to follow your footsteps in wanting to become an astronaut one day?

**DOMINICK:** We love people that work well with others. That's really the key. The technical side of being an astronaut is totally doable by the vast majority of the population. It's people skills, working with people, working in a closed environment. Just imagine hopping in an SUV with three or four other people and spending 30 days in there. You're eating, sleeping and going to the bathroom in that spot for 30 days. You don't want the person who's just clicking their pen while you want to tell them, 'Stop it!'

**AUDIENCE:** What keeps you up at night?

**DOMINICK:** An immense responsibility to not let humanity down.

sandiego.edu/dominick-2022





# With Heart and Soil

Sustainable agriculture, food justice and ancient Jewish wisdom intersect at Coastal Roots Farm

photography by Barbara Ferguson

On this particular warm fall day, Javier Guerrero is the personification of the word "stoked." He's as excited about the taste of fennel pollen (think black licorice) as he is about urging a taste of a fallen pineapple guava (tart, tasty and "chock full of vitamin C"). He waxes poetic about the more than 150 chickens in residence at Coastal Roots Farm but is adamantly uninterested in a suggestion that he consider adding goats to the mix.

"Every animal you introduce is a whole 'nother deal," he says. "We've got two flocks of chickens that are constantly moving, and that in itself is a lot of work."

Guerrero — who came on board as president and CEO of the Encinitas farm in 2018 — is perhaps happiest when he's getting his hands dirty or building things, with the possible exception of when he's expounding on the benefits that these chickens bring to the land.

"Our process for farming in this regenerative manner is this," he begins, as a preface to a private tour of the grounds. "We'll finish a crop, and the chickens will come through. We move them around every couple of weeks and they just tear up whatever's left. They eat the bugs, so that's pest management. They fertilize the soil. They turn and aerate the soil. Once they're finished, we'll plant a cover crop like clover or barley, which will put nitrogen and nutrients into the soil."

At the moment, the chickens are taking a break from their duties. Most are drowsing in the shade of their coop, which is on wheels so it can be easily moved from one part of the land to another.

"We'll then cover the soil with an occultation tarp, which blocks out sunlight," he continues.

"That'll cook down for several weeks, depending on the temperature. When you peel that back, it's ready for direct seeding or planting, and you never had to till the soil. You never had to break up that microbial world that you want to keep rich and intact. And between plantings, you're planting that cover crop because you want to keep the soil moist and rich to build up that microbial world."

It may appear that the route along the freeway leading from USD to Coastal Roots Farm is not lined with many farms, but actually, San Diego has the largest number of small farms — more than 5,000 of them — than any other county in the United States. The Leichtag Foundation, which aims to advance self-sufficiency, vibrant Jewish life and social entrepreneurship, acquired the property in 2012.

"This was the last 67½ acres of Ecke Ranch, which was formerly 800 contiguous acres of what was described as the flower growing capital of the world," explains Guerrero. "In 2014, 17 of those acres were set up to be Coastal Roots Farm as a program."

He notes that while the foundation is Jewish — and the farm itself is dedicated to the tenets of following practices that are thousands of years old as a living Jewish farm — it is not itself a Jewish organization.

"This is a welcoming place for people of all backgrounds," Guerrero says. "I use myself as the first example. I attend Mass at The Immaculata. My kids were both baptized there, and my father's memorial service was there. While the nature of how we farm is through Jewish values and traditions, we welcome people to bring in their own traditions that are connected

through agriculture."

Since its founding, the farm has been dedicated to organic farming and to caring for the environment. "We're balancing the idea of growing sustainable food with a commitment to food justice and making sure everybody has equitable access with dignity to fresh organic, nutrient-dense food."

The pay-what-you-can farm stand at the entrance is just one example of that work. Two days a week, the stand is open to all and offers up fresh organic produce and herbs. On Sundays, fresh eggs are available. Shoppers can opt to receive \$30 worth of food for free on each visit, checking out via an electronic tablet so they can privately pay what they can afford.

"They can also use EBT and extend that even further," he notes. "And it lets people shop locally. On average, food travels 1,500 to 2,500 miles before it comes to you, which is a huge carbon footprint. But if you're shopping here today, your food is coming from the field to the barn to harvest to the farm stand."

Like many traditions, Judaism is deeply rooted in agriculture. The concept of *Pe'ah* is one of the reasons the farm stand is not just about what is offered, but also where it's located on the land itself.

"If you look back at those ancient traditions, the notion of *Pe'ah* in ancient times was that people would plant in the corners and edges of the fields, so that the sick, the weary, the elderly and the traveler would have access with dignity to food," he says. "Here we have the farm stand on the corner and the edge of our property. It's a modern interpretation of *Pe'ah*."

he path that led Guerrero to his career might seem circuitous. But he sees his route as an own moral compass.

"As a values-driven person, I feel blessed to be able to be in a place that is truly guided by values," he says.

Guerrero earned his undergraduate degree at USD in 1995, majoring in anthropology with a minor in art history. He had been accepted to the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design and thought he might become a studio artist. But he opted to attend USD and chose his major as a first-year student after volunteering to help build exhibits at Balboa Park's Museum of Man.

A bit of a renaissance man, Guerrero is fluent in Spanish, English and Portuguese and is proficient in Italian. He spent a full semester in Florence and took side trips to France, Spain and Morocco, "hitting all the major museums." After graduation, the dual citizen, who was born in Mexico City, was off and running.

"I went back to Mexico for a year, living and working and spending time in rural and indigenous communities, and spent a second year in Central and South America," he recalls. He also took classes at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. After a solo backpacking trip, which included stops in Brazil and Italy, he continued his studies in the U.S.

He subsequently earned his master's degree in cultural anthropology and international health development, got a job at what's now known as the Museum of Us, and before long was approached to head the San Diego Children's Discovery Museum. During his eight-year stint as executive director, he expanded exhibits and oversaw a move to an indoor/outdoor location. He's rightfully proud of what he accomplished: "We went from having 7,500 annual visitors to having 160,000," he says.

Guerrero was ready to take on

the next challenge when he was approached by Coastal Roots Farm. Once offered the leadership position, it was a no-brainer. "I'm an outdoors person," he says. "I've always gravitated to rural communities and farming environs, to experiential education and outdoor learning."

He sees himself as a social entrepreneur. "I'm an artist at heart and this is a place where I could come and build upon a great foundation. To be honest, I was enamored of not just the mission and the impact, but of how much space there was to deliver on the impact — as well as the opportunity to grow both farming and educational programming. When I look at all the space we have here, it excites me and combines my passion and interest around health and wellness."

Additionally, the Jewish community farming methods appeal to the anthropologist in him. "Having studied, lived and traveled around the world, spending time in different agricultural communities and cultures, this is a perfect fit," he says. "We truly welcome people of all backgrounds, not just in terms of who we serve, but also with our staff. And in our culture, we can all relate to food and the notion of connecting the health and wellness of our body to food and the land."

he Leichtag Commons, which Coastal Roots Farms is a part of, includes more than a dozen agricultural enterprises, which are home to a number of nonprofits and organizations that focus on "various elements of environmental education and community engagement and serving all different ages and life stages." Besides Coastal Roots Farm, these include the Encinitas Union School District Farm Lab, the San Diego Botanic Garden and Seacrest Village Retirement Communities.





Before diving deeper into a tour, Guerrero explains the basic layout of the operation he heads.

"We've got several areas," he explains. "There are production fields, an 8.5-acre regenerative organic food forest — which is the largest in the region — and areas for environmental education. During COVID, we were right in the pocket of two critical sector needs: One was equitable access to food, and the other was the creation of an after-school on-the-farm program."

In the past two years, the farm's positive impact has been impressive. "We grew our food production and distribution by 100% and donated about 75% of that to the community. In the last year alone, our educational programs went from over 3,000 to over 6,000 pre-k through 12th-grade youth coming through the farm. About half of them are on scholarships," he says. "Much like we believe in equitable access to food, we want to ensure that everybody has access to hands-on experiential learning on a farm."

As part of their efforts, fresh produce is delivered to local Holocaust survivors, active-duty military and low-income seniors, in addition to assisting local tribal communities and tribal elders with both food donations and assistance in building their own garden operations.

Near the entrance to the farm's space for public programs and events, an inviting area lined with a split rail fence is bordered by

rows of crops like zucchini, squash and pumpkins alongside a grassy meadow. A barn adds to the pastoral feel of the place.

"This whole corridor here is dedicated to education and programs. The fields over there are where the kids participate in farming and gardening. This summer we had 11 weeks of camp with 600 campers. We call them 'farmers in training."

A new nature play area focuses on early childhood development. "It's facilitated by our educators. Guitars and music and story time take place on this stage, and they bring in supplies and materials for an outdoor art studio," he says.

Guerrero firmly believes in the ethos of "balancing screen time with green time," particularly when it comes to kids and teens. When asked if any of them ever push back, he answers like a shot. "I have literally never seen a kid on an electronic device while they're at the farm."

And there's plenty of cool stuff for nascent farmers in training to explore. "During COVID, we did a ton of building. It's very DIY. I like to design and build stuff," he says. The results of those efforts are nothing less than remarkable. All of it — the fencing, an outdoor classroom, planter boxes, a climbing structure made of artfully stacked eucalyptus trunks, a stage, an outdoor kitchen — was built in the last few years by Guerrero, his staff and volunteers.

Recently, the latter group has included folks from USD. In the

fall of 2022, alumni and students of the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) gathered at the farm for a Sundays in the Soil volunteer event. The small group was happy to get their hands dirty by weeding, mulching, prepping, planting and harvesting seasonal offerings.

"It was a great opportunity to be of service to the farm, and the community in general," says Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Amanda Gonzales.

o truly explore the offerings of the various sprawling farm areas, a vehicle makes more sense than hoofing it. Guerrero selects one of the orange Kubota RTVs next to the property's equipment barn, turns the key and expertly whips the vehicle around. A wise passenger had best hold tight to the grab bar as he peels around tight curves and up and down hills while pointing out the sights.

"This is our agroforestry system or food forest," he shouts.
"This model is trying to work with the land. The trees are planted on a contour or key line that follows the landscape and creates berms. On the upside, there's a swale to catch any water erosion downhill. There are a lot of elderberries planted here, which are quick-growing trees. They have a root system that establishes those berms, and our plan is to come in with more fruit-bearing trees."

One of the reasons Guerrero is so comfortable on the farm is

that it's not unfamiliar to him.
"I went to a school called Orca
in Seattle when I was a kid," he
explains, "and our entire educational experience was outdoors.
We had gardens at school and at
home. We planted a ton of what
we ate at home."

He pauses the RTV, leans down and picks up a fallen pineapple guava, then deftly cuts it open and hands over a still-warm slice. While its unfamiliar deliciousness is notable, there's no time to linger. The engine roars back to life and off we go, up hills and through unexpected pathways, but Guerrero never hesitates. He knows exactly where he's going: leading the charge to take the farm to the next level.

Much of Coastal Roots Farms' activities are funded by grants, donations and corporate support. Everything from the trees he wants to plant in the food forest to irrigation and growing supplies is the result of community and volunteer support.

"This is a place where I can build over a great foundation," he says. When Guerrero parks on a hill overlooking the property, the silence is deafening. Just a mile away, the waves of the Pacific beckon like a multifaceted jewel. The vibe is relaxed. Even bucolic.

"To be honest, being outside is good for you. There's something healing about just being in nature. And here we are, at a farm next to the ocean." His smile is wide and genuine. "What could be more healing than that?"









# CLASS NOTES



[altruistic]

# DREAMS DO COME TRUE

## Education provides the key to a new life

by Don Norcross

ichael Duoto '03 (DEd) has worked nearly his entire professional life in education. His chosen career path has served as a conduit for him to see the world.

Duoto, who grew up in Texas, taught in Bolivia, Colombia and

Japan. He served as principal of the Singapore American School for eight years and headed an international school for junior high and high school students in Brazil. "I like the change in perspective," he says of his travels.

He started USD's Leadership

Studies program while living in Singapore, waking up in the middle of the night to take some of his courses remotely. He recalls studying with military leaders, politicians and educators. "The program prepared us for running, I would say, a business,"

he says. "How to work within the system: organization, hiring, management skills."

Though he didn't know it at the time, his educational path would eventually lead him and his wife, Jill, to changing the lives of two teenagers living in Afghanistan.

Jill grew up in La Jolla and, by 2002, the couple had returned to San Diego. Through word of mouth, they heard that high school students were struggling in math and science when it came to the SAT and ACT entrance exams.

"Kids were falling through the

cracks," says Jill, who earned a bachelor's in education from UC Berkeley and a master's in education from San Diego State.

The pair formed High Bluff Academy, which started as a tutoring center and became an accredited school in 2011. Two years later, the first foreign student enrolled in the school. Konstantin Avdienko '18 (BS/BA), from Russia, went on to earn his undergraduate degree from USD and now works for Qualcomm as a software engineer.

In March of 2022, Jill received correspondence from Mohammad Mohammadi, a teenager from Afghanistan who wanted to come to the United States to attend school. He discovered High Bluff Academy with a Google search that included the words "best international high school" and "boarding."

"What he wrote was very moving," Jill says. "How he found this little, tiny school of about 50 students was like finding a needle in a haystack."

"It was my childhood dream to come to the United States," explains the 18-year-old. That dream was seemingly shattered in August 2021 when, after 20 years of helping Afghanistan fight the Taliban, the U.S. pulled out of the country. For Mohammadi and his family, which includes six children, the Taliban takeover changed their lives.

Because his father is of the Shiite minority, Hazara, which is being targeted by the Taliban for ethnic cleansing, his father lost his hotel and transportation business, his home and his car. "Everything," says Mohammadi.

Jill admits she was disappointed in the United States' sudden evacuation from Afghanistan. "After 20 years, billions of dollars spent, you saw the videos of people hanging on planes, trying to escape the Taliban," says Jill. "As an American, I was embarrassed."

For months, Mohammadi and his mother walked mile after mile, trying to get passports. Eventually, Mohammadi and his 19-year-old sister, Agilia, were successful and moved by themselves to Islamabad, Pakistan, where they lived in a youth hostel.

Under Taliban rule, girls and women have faced a multitude of restrictions, including being banned from education and forced to wear face and head coverings in public. They also are forbidden to travel without male companions. But Agilia had been encouraged by her father to pursue education, and via the internet, she and her brother have taught Afghani girls to speak English.

Meanwhile, Mohammad continued communicating with Jill, pursuing student visas for himself and his sister. On Sept. 30, after nearly 30 hours of traveling from Islamabad to Qatar to San Francisco, the pair arrived in San Diego.

"When we came out of the airplane, it was freedom," says Mohammad, who is interested in studying computer science.

Aqila wants to become a journalist and return to Afghanistan. "Girls don't have a voice in Afghanistan," she says. "I want to tell their stories."

The first thing brother and sister wanted to see in San Diego? "The beach," says Jill.

Mohammad and Agila now live with the Duotos. They're enrolled in classes and pursuing their dreams. "We lost our way in Afghanistan and Jill helped us," says Agila.

"I don't know how to say thank you," Mohammad adds. "We appreciate all her work."

"I just felt a connection with Mohammad," Jill says. "I said, 'OK, I can help this one family."

The Duotos have also enrolled a 16-year-old Ukrainian refugee in their school.

"We're not going to stop here." says Michael. 🥗

## 1950s

#### [1958]

NADINE THOMAS (BA) writes, "Hi, from Aiken, South Carolina! I moved from a big house to small one just around the corner. My son still lives in Seattle, and we had a lovely Christmas together with my three grandchildren, Ryan is a teacher in Texas, Dyan is a precious stone collector in Seattle, and Cassidy is studying for her master's degree."

## 1960s

#### [1960]

RONALD HOUSE (BA), '64 (JD) reports, "I retired from the practice of

law after 57 years. Time to enjoy children and grandchildren."

#### [1962]

#### PEGGY THOMPSON (BA)

writes, "Don and I celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary on June 16, 2022, with 11 of our children and grandchildren on a 14-day cruise through the British Isles, Guernsey and Normandy. It was a wonderfilled family trip!"

#### [1963]

VICTOR BIANCHINI (JD) provided this update: "U.S. national champion: sabre fencing and three-time national champion (2012, 2021 and 2022). Maccabiah Games Bronze Sabre Medal in 35-year-old division and silver in Team Epee."

#### ELOISA THOMPSON (BA) re-

ports that she has a new grandson. "William Robert Thompson Zuñiga was born July 12, 2022, to our youngest son, Robert, and his wife, Jessica. They have two other children, Edward Luis and Kaitlin Marie," she writes.

#### [1964]

PAUL MAJKUT (BA) reports that he retired in 2020 after a career teaching undergraduate and graduate literature and philosophy. He adds that during that time, he was also an active journalist, both within the U.S. and abroad. He has been awarded five Fulbright Senior Specialist and Scholar grants (Argentina, Finland, Germany, Mexico and Estonia), and two National Endowment for the Humanities awards (Oxford,

Cambridge). He is a reader of medieval manuscripts and rare books at the Bodleian Library Oxford, Cambridge University Library and the Huntington Library. He has received numerous journalism awards for this writing (the San Diego Press Club, the Los Angeles Press Club, the Southern California Press Club, the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Conference of Christians and Jews). In 1998, he founded the Society for Phenomenology and Media. He has lectured as a visiting professor widely in universities in the U.S., as well as internationally. Since retiring, he was asked by university colleagues abroad to teach classes online. Refusing pay, he decided to teach a course at the University of Jos, Nigeria, an impoverished university beset by religious violence.

#### [1968]



TOM LaPUZZA (BA) celebrated the publication in September of 2022 of his book, Weapons of Choice: A History of the Point Loma Navv Laboratory. The volume chronicles the first half of the eight-decade history of one of the Navy's premier research and engineering laboratories, Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific in San Diego, where he has worked for 53 years. Volume II is underway. He and his wife, Donna, celebrated their 53rd anniversary in August of 2022.

### 1970s

#### **HEATHER RUTH WISHIK (JD)**

provided this update: "I retired from my consulting practice in June 2022. This is the third time I have tried to retire — hopefully it sticks this time. I am happily immersed in making prints and collages and writing poems. Next up is a revision of the novel I began 35 years ago and put in a drawer."

## 1980s

#### [1980]

DIANE BRANKS (BA) provided this report: "Podiatrist for 37 years, of which 35 have been with Kaiser Permanente: San Bernardino Podiatric Surgery

(chief 1991-95) and Baldwin Park Vascular Surgery: Limb Preservation. Served as president of the California Podiatric Medical Association from 2021 to 2022. Married my husband, Paul Branks - who now is senior vice president of EastWest Bank — at Founders Chapel 35 years ago and we have three adult children. Katherine is getting her MBA from USC; Andrew is a supervisor at UPS and Annie is getting her PhD at University of Wisconsin at Madison in Biology Research. No grandchildren yet, but lots of cats, dogs and birds, plus my sweet little 95-yearold mother-in-law, who completes my family. I plan to retire in 2023."

#### JEFFREY L. SIMMONS (BA)

is working at USD's Learning and Design Center as an instructional designer. "Pursuing a late-in-life PhD in the leadership program with an emphasis on higher-ed," he adds.

#### [1981]

#### THOMAS LOFFARELLI (MBA)

has relocated to Lake Oswego, Oregon, "just eight miles from downtown Portland." He adds, "Hello to all my Torero faithful! Come up and visit; we have a room waiting for you. Let's plan a joint Zoom for all Torero clubs and groups across the U.S. and the world. We need to plan how we can help other Toreros, and how we can be an asset to USD and each other. It's about staying connected and finding out how we can be of assistance to others."

#### [1982]

#### SANDY BARSKY (BBA) writes,

"Even after the first year into my second career, my mind always goes back to my time at USD with so many good memories of being there; all of which starts with the people I met, from classmates to professors."

#### **CATHY CAMPBELL-GERMANN**

(BA) writes, "After 38 years in a career of sales and sales management, I retired in September! Mark and I are going to be snowbirds with this change, living our lives in northeast Florida and Westminster, Colorado. We are the proud parents of four children: two live in Colorado and the other two live in New York and Minnesota. As we wait for hopeful grandchildren, we

will continue to volunteer at our Catholic churches and the community, for myself to learn golf and play pickleball, to travel and to entertain. I am most grateful to USD for deepening my Catholic faith, which led to a life filled with friends and service!"

#### [1987]

#### CYNTHIA DURYEA-HIBBERT

(BA) reports that she was "recently honored by New York State Assemblywoman Pam Hunter as the Community Educator Exceptional Woman of the Year for my work as an adult programming planner for the Liverpool Public Library."

#### CHRISTOPHER KITZMAN (BA)

provided this update: "I went back to school in July 2020 at Chicago's Loyola University to pursue an executive MBA and did a 10-day international immersion in Paris with our EMBA cohort. I graduated in May 2022, and recently took a new job with a division of IBM."

JAMES NORIEGA (BA) writes, "On June 27, 2022, Elizabeth (Colonna) Noriega '86 and I welcomed our second grandchild, a beautiful baby girl named Isabel."

JACK TADE (BBA) joined the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) as a corporate controller in the Finance Directorate located at IDA's Alexandria, Virginia, headquarters. IDA is a nonprofit corporation that operates three federally funded research and development centers in the public interest sector. IDA answers the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical and analytic expertise.

#### CHRISTOPHER WELLBORN

(JD) was sworn in as first vice president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in August 2022. He is a solo criminal defense practitioner defending people in South Carolina accused of crimes ranging from misdemeanors to felony charges in state and federal courts throughout the country.

#### [1989]

JOEL G. SELIK (LLM) has been appointed by the State Bar of Nevada

to the standing committee on ethics and professional responsibility.

## 1990s

#### [1990]

STEVE CIHOMSKY (MA) has been a history teacher and boys soccer coach in Tempe, Arizona since 1997. He was the recipient of the Yale Summer History Program in 2007.

#### [1991]

RICHARD J. BRUECKNER (BA), '04 (JD) writes that he and his wife are living on the vacation

island of Ocean City, Maryland with their two daughters, Isabella (8) and Sophia (5). Rich founded RJB LAW, LLC, which has grown to be the largest DUI and Criminal Defense firm on the Eastern shore of Maryland. Rich loves helping people when the chips are down, specializing in handling more than 400 DUI cases annually. "USD helped instill a servant's heart, which has held me in good stead for all these years. Perhaps most importantly, my family is still surfing more than 200 days per year ... thanks USD!"

RANDY LASER (MBA) writes, "I am now working at Richard Branson's new cruise line, Virgin Voyages, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I'm leading the sailor and crew travel team."

#### [1992]

#### KATIE (MARTIN) KEEN (BA)

writes, "Jim and I are the owners of four Wetzel's Pretzels franchises in the San Diego/Temecula area and we just moved back to San Diego after living in Colorado for 17 years. We look forward to reconnecting with some old San Diego friends!"

#### [1994]

#### VICTORIA BAILEY (MSN)

writes, "Mostly I have spent the last 15 years working and taking care of my elderly mother. However, I retired from the VA and now want to enjoy all that San Diego has to offer."

STEVE McGREEVY (JD) was elected to the Orange County Superior Court on June 7, 2022. He is currently head of the OCDA Homicide Unit.

#### [1997]

#### AMANDA STROBERG (BA)

writes, "I'm in my 24th year in education working in San Diego as the attendance coordinator at Eastlake High School. My oldest son just started his freshman year in college (OU) and I also have a 10th and 8th grader. I have been married for 21 years to my husband, Shane, a local CPA, and we can be found on the sports fields watching our kids."

DEBRA WYMAN (JD) was featured in a story on the Lawdragon Magazine website. In it, she is described as "a top-tier securities litigator who has dedicated her career to seeking justice for defrauded investors. She has achieved client wins totaling more than \$2 billion, including a historic \$1 billion settlement in a securities fraud class-action lawsuit against the real estate investment trust company, VEREIT (formerly known as ARCP)."

## 2000s

#### [2000]

SCOTT BERGEN (BA), '21 (MEd) provided this update: "I took a job at Chaminade College Prep in West Hills, California, as assistant campus minister and teacher

#### CHRISTOPHER M. FALLON (JD)

has been named a partner in the Los Angeles office of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore. He provides representation and legal counsel to school and community college districts, special districts, independent schools and nonprofit entities. His practice focuses on matters pertaining to business and facilities including general vendor contracts, construction contracts and issues, procurement issues, property agreements and leases and various business issues. He is also a LEED (Leadership in Energy Environmental Design) Green Associate, meaning he has been accredited by the U.S. Green Business Certification Inc. as a professional with extensive knowledge of green building practices, construction and operations.

#### [2003]

BASIL CONSIDINE (BA) was the 2021-2022 U.S. Fulbright faculty fellow in Madagascar, where he taught at the University of Antananarivo, volunteered at local





[security]

# READY FOR THIS MOMENT

# Pair among first Peace Corps volunteers to return overseas

by Kelsey Grey '15 (BA)

wo recent University of San Diego alumnae are among the first Peace Corps volunteers to return overseas since the agency's unprecedented global evacuation in March 2020. The Peace Corps states that nearly 7,000 volunteers from more than 60 countries were evacuated. Now, the agency is ready to get back to work, send-

ing its first volunteers to seven countries in North, Central and South America.

"Our volunteers are ready to work hand in hand with communities across the Americas to meet this moment," says Peace Corps CEO Carol Spahn. "The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are far-reaching and the work of our partners and volun-

teers is critical to response and recovery efforts across the globe."

USD alumnae Paige Hopkins '20 (BA) and Riley Morales '22 (BBA) are currently serving in the Dominican Republic and Colombia, respectively.

Before leaving the United States for the Dominican Republic, Hopkins (pictured) had her suitcases sprawled on the floor of her bedroom in Seattle, Washington.

"I think my biggest challenge right now is finding clothing that is professional, cool and comfortable," she says, with a smile. "It's going to be between 75 and 80 percent humidity."

Peace Corps volunteers focus their work on one of six sectors agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health or youth in development. For Hopkins, her work is in education. She'll be teaching Spanish literacy to children.

"Most programs focus on English literacy, but in the Dominican Republic, I can actually teach Spanish," says Hopkins.
"I've been watching Spanish television shows and combing through my Spanish notes from USD to review verb tenses."

Her experiences at USD prepared her for this moment. She majored in international relations, minored in Spanish, and studied abroad in Madrid, keeping her Spanish skills sharp.

"I really loved USD because it has such a global focus and the faculty really encourages you to take opportunities to get outside of the United States and learn about different perspectives," she says.

It was the encouragement that Hopkins received from her professors that inspired her to consider applying for the Peace Corps after her graduation in May 2020. Despite the Peace Corps shutting down its operations overseas, Hopkins applied in June 2020 and stayed in communication with the agency for about a year and a half. By February 2022, she was notified that the Dominican Republic was opening back up and accepting volunteers again. She would be one of them.

Similarly to Hopkins, Morales was also made aware of the Peace Corps through her experiences at USD as an international business major. A fellow member in the USD Model United Nations club encouraged her to look into the opportunities that Peace Corps provided for recent graduates. She attended an on-campus presentation and immediately knew she'd found her calling.

"I believe the culture of the Changemaking campus and other organizations, such as Student International Business Council, greatly influenced me to pursue this international service opportunity," says Morales. "I wanted an opportunity to do social impact work directly following graduation."

She'll be volunteering in Colombia for 27 months and will work with the Community Economic Development program. Morales will collaborate with local stakeholders in Colombia to empower micro-entrepreneurs, leaders of partner organizations and community members to improve the economic outcomes for women and youth.

"I'm ecstatic about this opportunity!" she says. "I'm most excited to live abroad with my host family. I feel this will be the best way to achieve the cultural immersion experience that I desire, having not been able to study abroad during my time as an undergraduate, due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Both Hopkins and Morales are now in their respective countries, undertaking the work they set out to do. As for nerves about settling into their new lives, the two seem even-keeled.

"The only thing that would be devastating is if there were another health crisis that would require the U.S. government to call back volunteers," says Morales. "But I feel very confident in the Peace Corps and the precautions they have in place for volunteers, which allows us to focus on our work."

Currently, the Peace Corps is recruiting volunteers to serve in more than 30 countries around the globe. Since President John F. Kennedy established the agency in 1961, more than 240,000 Americans have served in more than 140 countries.

Since the Peace Corps lifted its suspension this summer, volunteers have returned to 11 countries to continue their work.



schools and led an international performance tour by Really Spicy Opera. In addition to dozens of outreach lectures, lessons and workshops, he also baked more than 138 kilos of flour into bread to feed his students and local unhoused persons and amassed an "obscenely large collection of lemur paintings that he commissioned."

#### [2005]

NICK BELLANCA (BACC) provided this update: "I recently joined Marsh McLennan Agency (MMA) as vice president of employee health and benefits, specializing in health care plan design, benefits and total rewards consulting for employers. Prior to joining MMA, I was a founding member of Genomic Life. and led their group benefits division. While at Genomic Life, I helped create their unique cancer guardian program, designed their go-to-market strategy and led their national sales efforts in the employer market. We were the first organization to introduce genomic programs as an employee benefit."

#### [2006]

#### MELANIE BRANDT (MEd)

writes, "I began the 2022-23 school year as the assistant principal of Madison Avenue Elementary in the Cajon Valley Union School District. I am a proud member of the Madison community! Go Eaglets!"

PATRICK NASR (BACC) currently serves as a vice president in the Life Sciences group at Blackstone and recently joined the National Cancer Center's Board of Directors.

LIANNA TABAR (BA) married Andre Downes on June 11, 2022, at St. Cecilia Church in Boston, Massachusetts. The couple was grateful to be surrounded by family and friends that day, and to celebrate with more family and friends a week later at a reception in El Dorado Hills, California.

#### [2007]

MOLLIE SITKOWSKI (BA) reports that she is "now a partner at a law firm practicing international trade law!"

#### KRESTSNA TOTTRESS (BBA)

started a new job as the senior manager of billing operations at an oncology diagnostic laboratory in San Francisco.

#### [2008]

#### ALEXANDRA KRASOVEC (BA)

was promoted to partner in the Consumer Protection, Advertising, and Competition Practice Group at Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, on Jan. 1, 2022. Her practice focuses on Telephone Consumer Protection Act compliance and class-action defense.

#### 2009

DANIEL BROWN (BA) is a San Diego architect for Gensler. He writes, "For the last four years, I've been working on the new Snapdragon Stadium (home to the SDSU Aztecs, San Diego Legion and San Diego Wave). I'm proud to be a part of making this stadium a new standard for sports and entertainment facilities."

## 2010s

#### [2011]

#### LAUREN (PAULUS) EAGAN

(**JD**) is the founder and CEO of Eagan Immigration, a female-led U.S.-based law firm dedicated to empowering immigrants to achieve. The fully remote company specializes in humanitarian immigration cases and is making plans to expand into employment-based immigration. Founded in 2014, the firm has grown from one attorney to a workforce of more than 70 team members and counting. In the summer of 2022, the company debuted on Inc. Magazine's Inc. 5000 list, which is described as "the most prestigious ranking of the nation's fastest-growing private companies in America."

#### SAMANTHA (SHENKO) KING

(BA) has been working in the federal government for the last 11 years as a "contractor for two years, civil servant for nine years" in the Washington, D.C., area. She says she started as a contractor in logistical planning and then became an analyst. Since then, she's been promoted and worked through the ranks as a liaison, briefer, chief of operations, and is now a senior-level manager. "I'm one of the fastest females to elevate from entry-level to senior ranking within the organization," she wrote. "I earned my master's degree in global security studies from Johns Hopkins University in 2018 while working full time and have competed in multiple bodybuilding competitions. We got married in Austin in February 2022! Next year, I will have served 10 years as a civil servant and we're looking forward to starting a family. We recently bought our first home in San Antonio."

#### [2012]

MEGAN EILERS (BA) graduated from Chapman University's Fowler School of Law in 2018 and is working as in-house privacy counsel at Western Digital Corporation.

TYLER WILSON (BA) is an attorney for Flores & Pelaez-Prada in San Antonio, Texas. He and his wife of six years, Cristina, have two sons: Bennett, 3; and Noah, 1.

MICHAEL ZARCONI (JD) has been selected for inclusion in the 2023 edition of Best Lawyers in America; Ones to Watch in the fields of commercial litigation and insurance law. He works for the firm Sullivan Hill Rez & Engel, which provides "full-service representation to clients in a variety of industries with an emphasis in insolvency, construction disputes, insurance coverage, real estate, business disputes, civil litigation and transactional work."

#### [2013]

NATALY (YOSEF) CARAS (BA) writes, "My husband, Zac Caras '13 (BBA), and I met at USD. We have been happily together for more than 10 years. Zac is exceling in his data analytics position for a start-up known as Klover, and I'm practicing real estate law. We live in Chicago now. We are so, so grateful to USD for bringing us together!"

#### TARA IGUIDBASHIAN (BA)

reports that she "is now corporate partnerships activation account manager for Kroenke Sports and Entertainment (Denver Nuggets, Colorado Avalanche, Colorado Rapids, Colorado Mammoth)."

#### ROMYN SABATCHI (BBA)

reports that she played Lady Capulet in *Romeo and Juliet* and Nikki in *Both Your Houses* for the 2022 Hawaii Shakespeare Festival.

ALEX SHUSKO (BA) reports that spouse Erin (Hong) '13 (BA) completed her DDS from UCLA in 2017, and has been in practice in New York, California and soon, Scottsdale, Arizona. Alex complet-

ed his MD from Creighton in 2017, completed ophthalmology training in 2022 and started practice in Scottsdale in August 2022.

#### [2016]

KEITH VAN WAGNER (JD) was selected to be the group program manager for the County of San Diego's new Public Records Act Unit, which is responsible for coordinating responses to all countywide Public Records Act requests.

#### [2017]

LAUREN (RILEY) BAGIAN (BA) and Mike Bagian '16 (BS/BA) are happy to announce their recent marriage.

KATELYN JOHNSON (BA) reports that she has moved back to San Diego from Seattle for a new position at the Oceanside Arts Museum.

#### [2018]

GARY COUCH (BS/BA) married Alexis Dachs '17 (BA) on Sept. 24, 2022.

#### VICKY (MADERA) JAMISON

(MA) is working as a master sommelier for Talbott Vineyards in Carmel, California. She also volunteers with anti-human-trafficking organizations in Salinas, California. She is married and has a 2-year-old son.

KIRAN LONG-IYER (BA) was recently a guest speaker for USD's Psychology and Behavior Neuroscience Club this semester. They discussed their career trajectory from working at a start-up that creates fiber photometry imaging systems for use in neuroscience research to their current research at UC Davis in the Tian Lab probing neuromodulation in the brain.

#### [2019]

**DELILAH BISHOP** (**BA**) is a co-founder of and producer at Be Kind Studios, a boutique stills and film production team.

**EARVIN BUCKNER** (MA) recently got married.

ELLIE PETTY (BA) joined the doctoral program in chemical and biological sciences at Scripps Research in Fall 2022.

#### McKENNA SAKAMOTO (BA)

is a neuropsychology research coordinator at the VA San Diego Healthcare System. She began a PhD program in

clinical psychology at Pennsylvania State University in Fall 2022.

TARA VUKOVICH (JD) has a new position as business and construction defect litigation attorney at Lorber Greenfield & Polito LLP.

KENNETH YEE (MS) writes, "After obtaining my master's degree in cybersecurity operations and leadership, I was able to switch careers to work as an IT specialist in 2020. I will transition to information system security officer."

### 2020s

#### [2020]

MICHAEL APOSTOL (BA) is a staff research associate in the Translational Neuroimaging Lab at UCLA. He is testing whether noninvasive brain stimulation influences withdrawal symptoms in people who smoke cigarettes.

#### AMANDA HOLBROOK (BA)

will attend the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida, to pursue her PhD in clinical science. She is looking forward to pursuing research and working toward becoming a licensed clinical psychologist.

**ASHLYNN ROSS** (BA) is a second-year student in the master's program at Yale University's Divinity School.

**JAY SEVILLA** (**MA**) is an academic advisor for UC Berkeley.

CHINONYE WAMKPAH (BA) joined the Master of Public Health program in Behavioral Social Health Education Sciences at Emory University in Fall 2022.

#### [2021]

JOSEPH EYERMAN (MS) writes, "Getting my master's from USD was the best thing I could have done for my career. More important, I became a better version of myself thanks to the LEPSL program."

SCOTT OMAHEN (MSN) is currently working at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit.

#### 2022

**ALEXA ANDRADE** (**BA**) is pursuing a master's degree in cognitive

science in education at Columbia University.

ALI BELL (BA) accepted a position as an environmental educator with AmeriCorps at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

BRENNAN HARRIS (BA) traveled through Europe and other countries with two of her best friends after graduation to explore other cultures and possible jobs or graduate school opportunities abroad.

**AKEMI ITO** (**BA**) joined the neuroscience PhD program at Boston University in the fall of 2022.

MICHELLE NGUYEN (BA) is pursuing a master's program in genetic counseling at Stanford University.

ANAHI BUSTILLOS SALAZAR (BA) is joining the neurobiology PhD program at the University of Chicago.

RILEY WEEDEN (BA) is pursuing graduate school for a master's degree in mental health counseling at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas.

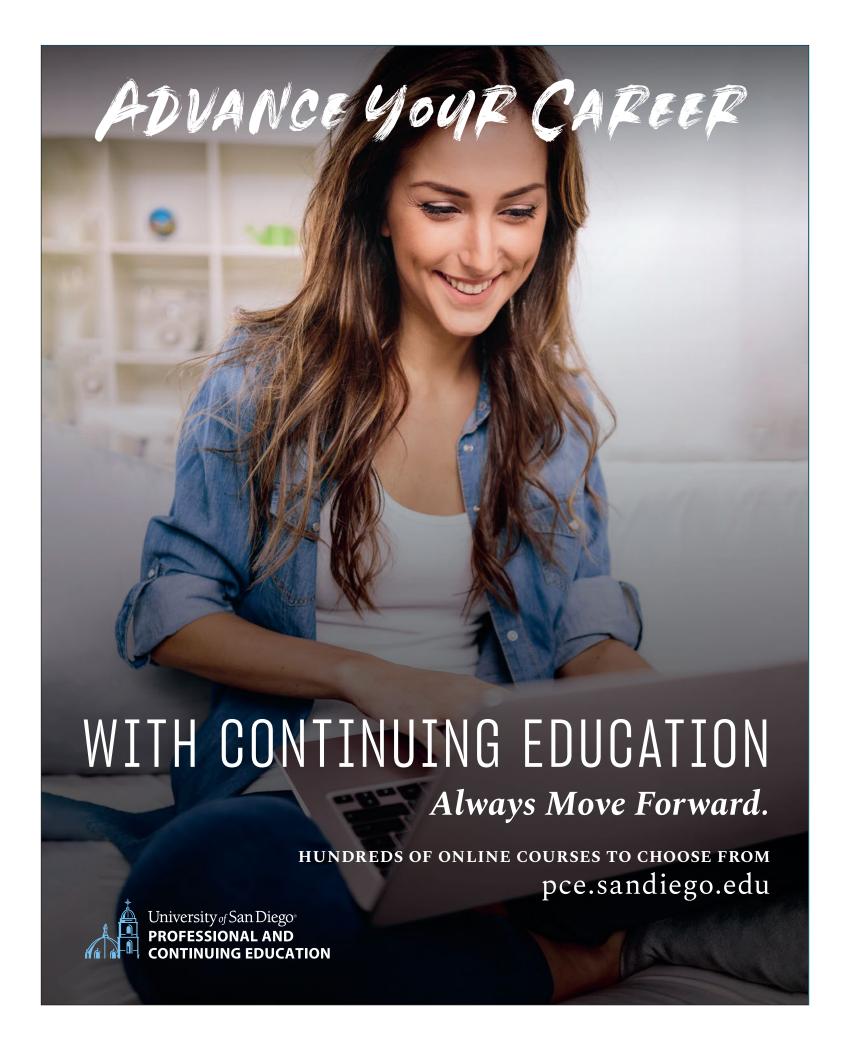
**SAMUEL WHITE** (MS) got married on Jan. 1, 2022. "We moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, for my wife's residency and I got a job as the property manager of a 52-acre real estate development," he writes.

### In Memoriam

TRUSTEE EMERITUS A. EUGENE ("GENE") TREPTE passed away at the age of 97 in mid-September of 2022. He continued his father and grandfather's legacy of building major San Diego landmark buildings as president of the Trepte Construction Company, which was founded in 1895. Celeste, his wife of more than six decades, passed away in 2014. He is survived by his three daughters, nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren as well as his sister.

## Send Class Notes

Submit class notes via email to classnotes@sandiego.edu.

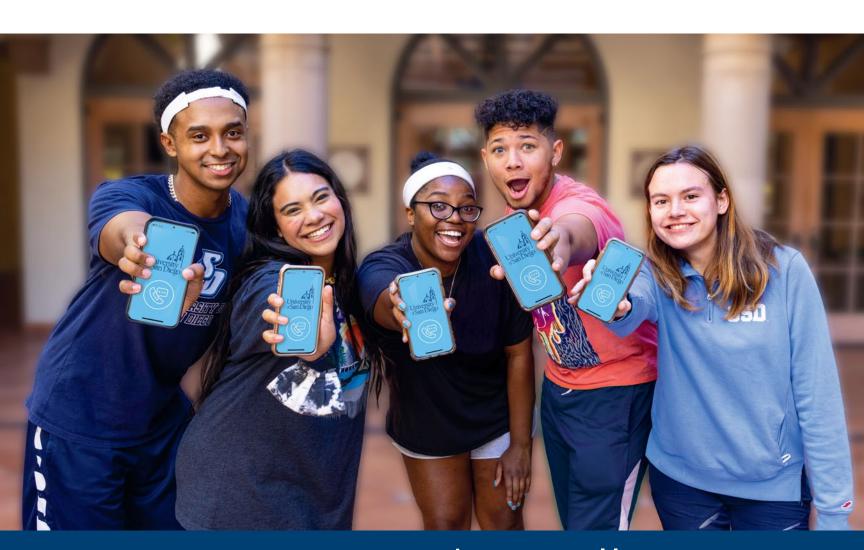




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